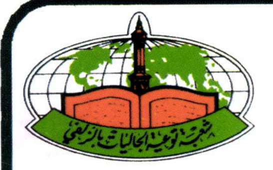
تعريف بالإسلام - انجليزي



Islam in Concept



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ISLAM
in
CONCEPT

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This book was prepared in cooperation with World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY)


بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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IN THE NAME OF ALMIGHTY GOD
THE MERCIFUL, THE COMPASSIONATE

Chapter One

ISLAM AT A GLANCE

ISLAM AND MUSLIMS

The Arabic word Islam means peace, submission and obedience. The religion of Islam is the complete acceptance of the teachings and guidance of God as revealed to His Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

A Muslim is one who believes in God and strives for total reorganization of his life according to His revealed guidance and the sayings of the Prophet. He also works for building human society on the same basis. 'Muhammadanism' is a misnomer for Islam and offends its very spirit.

The word 'Allah' is the proper name of God in Arabic. It is a unique term because it has no plural or feminine gender.

CONTINUITY OF MESSAGE

Islam is not a new religion. It is, in essence, the same message and guidance which Allah revealed to all Prophets:

Say, we believe in Allah and that which has been revealed to Abraham and Ismael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes and that which was given to Moses and Jesus and to other Prophets, from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to him we submit. (Qura'n 3:83).

The message which was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is Islam in its comprehensive, complete and final form.

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

There are five pillars of Islam

1. The declaration of faith: To bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah, and that Muhammad is His Messenger to all human beings till the Day of judgement. The Prophethood of Muhammad obliges the Muslims to follow his exemplary life as a model.

2. Prayers: Daily prayers are offered five times a day as a duty towards Allah. They strengthen and enliven the belief in Allah and inspire man to a higher morality. The purify the heart and prevent temptation towards wrong-doings and evils.

3. Fasting the month of Ramadan: The Muslims during the month of Ramadan not only abstain from food drink and sexual intercourse from dawn to sunset, but also from evil intentions and desires. It teaches love, sincerity and devotion. It develops a sound social conscience, patience, unselfishness and willpower.

4. Zakat: To pay annually 2.5% of one's net saving on which a year has passed as a religious duty and purifying sum to be spent on poorer sections of the community.

5. Pilgrimage to Makkah: It is to be performed once in a lifetime, if one can afford it financially and physically.

Besides these pillars every action which is done with the awareness that it fulfills the will of Allah is also considered an act of worship.

Islam enjoins faith in the Oneness and Sovereignty of Allah, which makes man aware of the meaningfulness of the Universe and of his place in it. This belief frees him from all fears and superstitions by making him conscious of presence of the Almighty Allah and of man's obligations towards Him. This faith must be expressed and tested in action. Faith alone is not enough. Belief in one God requires that we look upon all humanity as one family under the universal Omnipotence of God - the Creator and Nourisher of all. Islam rejects the idea of a chosen people, making faith in God and good action the only way to heaven. Thus, a direct relationship is established with God, without any intercessor.

MAN: THE FREE AGENT

Man is the highest creation of God. He is equipped with the highest of potentialities. He is left relatively free in his will, action and choice. God has shown him the right path, and the life of Prophet Muhammad provides a perfect example. Man's success and salvation lies in following both. Islam teaches the sanctity of the human personality and confers equal rights upon all without any distinction of race, sex or colour.

The law of God, enunciated in the Qura'n and exemplified in the life of the Prophet, is supreme in all cases. It applies equally to the highest and the lowest, the price and the peasant, the ruler and the ruled.

QURA'N AND HADITH

The Qura'n is the last revealed word of God and the basic source of Islamic teachings and laws. The Qura'n deals with the bases of creeds, morality, history of humanity, worship knowledge, wisdom, God-man relationship, and human relationship in all aspects. Comprehensive teachings on which, can be built sound systems of social justice, economics, politics, legislation, jurisprudence, law and international relations, are important contents of the Holy Qura'n.

Mohammad (PBUH) himself was an unlettered man who could not read or write. Yet, the Holy Qura'n was committed to memory and writing by his followers, under his supervision, during his lifetime. The original and complete text of the Qura'n is available to everybody in Arabic, the language in which it was revealed. Translations of the meaning into many languages are widely used. HADITH, the teachings, sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad, meticulously reported and collected by his devoted companions, explain and elaborate the Qura'nic verses.

CONCEPT OF WORSHIP

Islam does not teach or accept mere ritualism. It emphasizes intention and action. To worship God is to know Him and love Him, to act upon His law in every aspect of life, to enjoin goodness and forbid wrong-doing and oppression, to practise charity and justice and to serve Him by serving mankind. The

Qura'n presents this concept in the following subline manner:
It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the East or the West, but righteous is he who believes in God and the Last Day and the Angels and the Book and the Prophets; and gives his wealth for love of him to kinsfolk and to orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask and to set slaves free; and observes proper worship and pays the Zakah. And those who keep their treaty when they make one, and the patient in tribulation and adversity and time of stress; such are those who are sincere. Such are the Godfearing. (Qura'n 2:177).

ISLAMIC WAY OF LIFE

Islam provides definite guidelines for all peoples to follow in all walks of life. The guidance it gives is comprehensive and includes the social, economic, political, moral and spiritual aspects of life. The Qura'n reminds man of the purpose of his life on earth, of his duties and obligations towards himself, his kith and kin, his community, his fellow human beings and his Creator. Man is given fundamental guidelines about a purposeful life and then he is left with the challenge of human existence before him so that he might put these high ideals into practice. In Islam, man's life is a wholesome, integrated unit and not a collection of fragmented; competitive parts. The sacred and secular are not separate parts of man: they are united in the nature of being human.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Muhammad (blessing and peace be upon Him) was born in the year 570 A.C. in the city of Makkah in Arabia. He came of a noble family; he received the first revelation at the age of forty. As soon as he started preaching Islam, he and his followers were persecuted and had to face severe hardships. He was, therefore, commanded by God to migrate to Madinah, another city in Arabia. During a short span of 23 years, he completed his mission of prophethood and died at the age of 63. He led a perfect life and set an example for all humanbeings as his life was the embodiment of the Qura'nic teachings.

ISLAM'S RATIONAL APPEAL

Islam in its clear and direct way of expressing truth has a tremendous amount

of appeal for any seeker of knowledge. It is a solution for all the problems of life. It is a guide towards a better and complete life glorifying, in all its phases, God, the Almighty Creator and the Merciful Nourisher.

MUSLIM POPULATION AT A GLANCE (1975 Estimates)

Region	Population
Africa	224.20
Asia	575.30
Europe	20.00
N. & S. America & Australia	4.00
Total	★823.50

Number of countries with over 50% Muslim population is 58.

★ Now in view of the growth in population during nine years after 1975 and world-wide trend of conversions to Islam, the Muslim population is believed to have risen above one billion.

ISLAM - THE SOLUTION OF MODERN PROBLEMS

The Brotherhood of Man: A major problem which modern man faces is that of recism. The materially advanced nations can send man to the moon but they cannot stop man from hating and fighting his fellow man. Islam, over the last 1400 years, has shown in practice how racism can be ended. Every year, during Hajj, the Islamic miracle of real brotherhood of all races and nations can be seen in action.

The Family: The family which is the basic unit of civilisation is disintigrating in all western countries. Islam's family system brings into a fine equilibrium the rights of man, wife, children and relatives. Islam nourishes human unselfishness, generosity and love in a well-organised family system.

UNFRAGMENTED VIEW OF LIFE

Human beings live according to their view of life. The tragedy of secular societies is that they fail to connect the different aspects of life. The secular and the religious, the scientific and the spiritual seem to be in conflict. Islam puts an end to this conflict and brings harmony to man's vision of life.

Chapter Two

WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE QURA'N

Humanity has received the Divine guidance only through two channels: firstly the word of Allah, secondly the Prophets who were chosen by Allah to communicate His will to human-beings. These two things have always been going together and attempts to know the will of Allah by neglecting either of these two have always been misleading. The Hindus neglected their prophets and paid all attention to their books that proved only word puzzles which they ultimately lost. Similarly the Christians, in total disregard to the Book of Allah, attached all importance to Christ and thus not only elevated him to Divinity, but also lost the very essence of TAWHEED (monotheism) contained in the Bible.

As a matter of fact the main scriptures revealed before the Qura'n i.e. the Old Testament and Gospel, came into book-form long after the days of the Prophets and that too in translation. This was because the followers of Moses and Jesus made no considerable efforts to preserve these revelations during the life of their Prophets. Rather they were written long after their death. Thus what we now have in the form of the Bible (the Old as well as the New Testament) is translations of individuals' accounts of the original revelations which contain additions and deletions made by the followers of the said Prophets. On the contrary, the last revealed Book, the Qura'n is extant in its original form. Allah Himself guaranteed its preservation and that is why the whole of the Qura'n was written during the life time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself though on separate pieces of palm leaves, parchments, bones etc. Moreover, there were tens of thousands of the companions of the Prophets who memorized the whole Qura'n and the Prophet himself used to recite it to the angel Gabriel once a year and twice when he was about to die. Then the first Caliph Abu Bakr entrusted the collection of the whole Qura'n in one volume

to the Prophet's scribe Zaid Ibn Thabit.

This volume was with Abu Bakr till his death. Then it was with the second Caliph Umar and after him it came to Hafsa, the Prophet's wife. It was from this original copy that the third Caliph Uthman prepared several other copies and sent them to different Muslim territories.

The Qura'n was so meticulously preserved because it was to be the Book of guidance for humanity for all times to come. That is why it does not address the Arabs alone in whose language it was revealed. It speaks to man as a human being:

"O Man! what has seduced you from your Lord". The practicability of the Qura'nic teachings is established by the examples of Mohammad (PBUH) and the good Muslims throughout the ages. The distinctive approach of the Qura'n is that its instructions are aimed at the general welfare of man and are based on the possibilities within his reach. In all its dimensions the Qura'nic wisdom is conclusive. It neither condemns nor tortures the flesh nor does it neglect the soul. It does not humanise God nor does it deify man. Everything is carefully placed where it belongs in the total scheme of creation.

Actually the scholars who allege that Muhammad (PBUH) was the author of the Qura'n claim something which is humanly impossible. Could any person of the sixth century C.E. utter such scientific truths as the Qura'n contains? Could he describe the evolution of the embryo inside the uterus so accurately as we find it in modern science?

Secondly, is it logical to believe that Muhammad (PBUH) who up to the age of forty was marked only for his honesty and integrity, began all of a sudden the authorship of a book matchless in literary merit and the equivalent of which the whole legion of the Arab poets and orators of highest calibre could not produce? And lastly, is it justified to say that Muhammad (PBUH) who was known as AL-AMEEN (the trustworthy) in his society and who is still admired by the non-Muslim scholars for his honesty and integrity, came forth with a false claim and on that falsehood could train thousands of men of character, integrity and honesty, who were able to establish the best human society on the sur-

face of the earth?

Surely, any sincere and unbiased searcher of truth will come to believe that the Qura'n is the revealed Book of Allah.

Without necessarily agreeing with all that they said, we furnish here some opinions of important non-Muslim scholars about the Qura'n. Readers can easily see how the modern world is coming closer to reality regarding the Qura'n. We appeal to all open minded scholars to study the Qura'n in the light of the aforementioned points We are sure that any such attempt will convince the reader that the Qura'n could never be written by any human being.

However often we turn to it (the Qura'n) at first disgusting us each time afresh, it soon attracts, astounds, and in the end enforces our reverence...Its style, in accordance with its contents and aim is stern, grand, terrible - ever and anon truly sublime - thus this book will go an exercising through all ages a most potent influence.

- Goethe,
quoted in T.P. Hughes' *Dictionary of Islam*,
p.526.

The Koran admittedly occupies an important position among the great religious books of the world. Though the youngest of the epoch-making works belonging to this class of literature, it yields to hardly any in the wonderful effect which it has produced on large masses of men. It has created an all but new phase of human thought and a fresh type of character. It first transformed a number of heterogeneous desert tribes of the Arabian peninsula into a nation of heroes, and then proceeded to create the vast politico-religious organisations of the Muhammadan world which are one of the great forces with which Europe and the East have to reckon today.

G Margoliouth
Introduction to J.M. Rodwell's
The Koran, New York: Everyman's Library,
1977, p. VII

A work, then, which calls forth so powerful and seemingly incompatible emotions even in the distant reader - distant as to time, and still more so as mental development - a work which not only conquers the repugnance which he may begin its perusal, but changes this adverse feeling into astonishment and admiration, such a work must be a wonderful production of the human mind indeed and a problem of the highest interest to every thoughtful observer of the destinies of mankind.

-Dr. Steingass
quoted in T.P. Hughes'
Dictionary of Islam, pp. 526-7.

The above observation makes the hypothesis advanced by those who see Muhammad as the author of the Qura'n untenable. How could a man, from being illiterate, become the most important author, in terms of literary merits, in the whole of Arabic literature? How could he then pronounce truths of a scientific nature that no other human-being could possibly have developed at that time, and all this without once making the slightest error in his pronouncement on the subject?

-Maurice Bucaille,
The Bible, the Qura'n and Science,
1978, p. 125.

Here, therefore, its merits as a literary production should perhaps not be measured by some preconceived maxims of subjective and aesthetic taste, but by the effects which it produced in Muhammad's contemporaries and fellow countrymen. If it spoke so powerfully and convincingly to the hearts of his hearers as to weld hitherto centrifugal and antagonistic elements into one compact and well organised body, animated by ideas far beyond those which had until now ruled the Arabian mind, then its eloquence was perfect, simply because it created a civilised nation out of savage tribes, and shot a fresh woof into the old warp of history.

-Dr. Steingass, quoted in Hughes' *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 528.

In making the present attempt to improve on the performance of my predecessors, and to produce somthing which might be accepted as echoing however faintly the sublime rhetoric of the Arabic Koran, I have been at pain to study the intricate and richly varied rhythms which - apart from the message itself - constitute the Koran's undeniable claim to rank amongst the greater literary masterpieces of mankind. This very characteristic feature - 'that inimitable symphony', as the believing Pickthall described his Holy Book, 'the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy' - has been almost totally ignored by previous translators; it is therefore not surprising that what they have wrought sounds dull and flat indeed in comparison with the splendidly decorated original.

-Arthur J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted,*
London: Oxfort University Press,
1964, p. X.

A totally objective examination of it (the Qura'n) in the light of modern knowledge, leads us to recognise the agreement between the two, as has been already noted on repeated occasions. It makes us deem it quite unthinkable for a man of Muhammad's time to have been the author of such statements, on account of the state of knowledg in his day. Such considerations are part of what gives the Qura'nic Revelation its unique place, and forces the impartial scientist to admit his inability to provide an explanation which calls solely upon materialistic reasoning.

-Maurice Bucaille,
The Qura'n and Modern Science,
1981, p. 18.

Chapter Three

WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT ISLAM

The Islam that was revealed to Muhammad (PBUH), is the continuation and culmination of all the preceding revealed religions and hence it is for all times and all peoples. This status of Islam is sustained by glaring facts. Firstly, there is no other revealed book extant in the same form and content as it was revealed. Secondly, no other revealed religion has any convincing claim to provide guidance in all walks of human life for all times. But Islam addresses humanity at large and offers basic guidance regarding all human problems. Moreover, it has withstood the test of fourteen hundred years and has all the potentialities of establishing an ideal society as it did under the leadership of the last Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

It was a miracle that Prophet Muhammad could win even his toughest enemies to the fold of Islam without adequate material resources. Worshippers of idols, blind followers of the ways of forefathers, promoters of tribal feuds, abusers of human dignity and blood, became the most disciplined nation under the guidance of Islam and its Prophet. Islam opened before them vistas of spiritual heights and human dignity by declaring righteousness as the sole criterion of merit and honour. Islam shaped their social, cultural, moral and commercial life with basic laws and principles which are most in conformity with human nature and hence applicable in all times as human nature does not change.

It is so unfortunate that the Christian West instead of sincerely trying to understand the phenominal success of Islam during its earlier time, considered it as a rival religion. During the centuries of the Crusades this trend gained much more force and impetus and huge literature was produced to tarnish the image of Islam. But Islam has begun to unfold its genuineness to the modern scholars whose bold and objective observations on Islam belie all the charges levelled against it by the so-called unbiased orientalists.

Here we furnish some observations on Islam by great and acknowledged non-

Muslim scholars of modern time. Truth needs no advocates to plead on its behalf. But the prolonged malicious propoganda against Islam has created great confusion even in the minds of free and objective thinkers.
We hope that the following observations would contribute to initiating an objective evaluation of Islam.

It (Islam) replaced monkishness by manliness. It gives hope to the slave, brotherhood to mankind, and recognition of the fundamental facts of human nature.
Canon Taylor,
Paper read before the Church Congress at
Walverhampton, Oct 7 1887,
Quoted by Arnond in *The Preaching of Islam,* pp. 71-72.

Sense of Justice is one of the most wonderful ideals of Islam, because as I read in the Qura'n I find those dynamic principles of life, not mystic but practical ethics for the daily conduct of life suited to the whole world.
Sarojini Naidu,
Lectures on "The Ideals of Islam" see
Speeches and Writings of Sarojini Naidu,
Madras, 1918, p. 167.

History makes it clear however, that the legend of fanatical Muslims sweeping through the world and forcing Islam at the point of the sword upon conquered races is one of the most fantastically absurd myths that historians have ever repeated.
De Lacy O'Leary,
Islam at the Crossroads,
London, 1923 p. 8.

But Islam has a still further service to render to the cause of humanity. It stands after all nearer to the real East than Europe does, and it possesses a magnificent tradition of inter-racial understanding and cooperation. No other society has such a record of success in uniting in an equality of status, of opportunity, and of endeavours so many and so various races of mankind... Islam has still the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. If ever the opposition of the great societies of East and west is to be replaced by cooperation, the mediation of Islam is an indispensable condition. In its hands lies very largely the solution of the problem with which Europe is faced in its relation with the East. If they unite, the hope of a peaceful issue is immeasurably enhanced. But if Europe, by rejecting the cooperation of Islam, throws it into the arms of its rivals, the issue can only be disastrous for both.

H.A.R. Gibb, *Whither Islam*,
London, 1932, p. 379.

I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him - the wonderful man and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Savior of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world, he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much needed peace and happiness: I have prophesied about the faith of Muhamad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of tomorrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of today.

G.B. Shaw, *The Genuine Islam*,
Vol. 1, No. 81936.

The exstinction of race consciousness as between Muslims is one of the outstanding achievements of Islam and in the contemporary world there is, as it happens, a crying need for the propagation of this Islamic virtue.

A.J. Toynbee, *Civilisation on Trial*, New York, 1948, p. 205.

The rise of Islam is perhaps the most amazing event in human history. Springing from a land and a people like previously negligible, Islam spread within a century over half the earth, shattering great empires, overthrowing long-established religions, remoulding the souls of races, and building up a whole new world - world of Islam.

The closer we examine this development the more extraordinary does it appear. The other great religions won their way slowly, by painful struggle and finally triumphed with the aid of powerful monarchs coverted to the new faith. Christianity had its Constantine, Budhism its Asoka, and Zoroastrianism its Cyrus, each lending to his chosen cult the mighty force of secular authority, Not so Islam. Arising in a desert land sparsely inhabited by a nomad race previously undistinguished in human annals. Islam sallied forth on its great adventure with the slenderest human backing and against the heaviest material odds. Yet Islam triumphed with seemingly miraculous ease, and a couple of generations saw the Fiery Crescent borne victorious from the Pyrenees to the Himalayas and from the desert of Central Asia to the deserts of Central Africa.

A.M.L. Stoddard, quoted in

Islam - The Religion of All Prophets,

Begum Bawani Waqf, Karachi, Pakistan p. 56.

Islam is a religion that is essentially rationalistic in the widest sense of this term considered etymologically and historically. The definition of rationalism as a system that bases religious beliefs on principles furnished by the reason applied to it exactly. It cannot be denied that many doctrines and systems of theology and also many superstitions, from the worship of saints to the use of rosaries and amulets, have become grafted on the main trunk of Muslim creed. But in spite of the rich development, in every sense of the term, of the teachings of the Prophet, the Qura'n has invariably kept its place as the fundamental starting point, and the dogma of unity of God has always been proclaimed therein with a grandeur, a majesty, an invariable purity and with a note of sure

conviction, which it is hard to find surpassed outside the pale of Islam. This fidelity to the fundamental dogma of the religion, the elemental simplicity of the formula in which it is enunciated, the proof that it gains from the fervid conviction of the missionaries who propagate it, are so many causes to explain the success of Muhammadan missionary efforts. A creed so precise, so stripped of all theological complexities and consequently so accessible to the ordinary understanding might be expected to possess and does indeed possess a marvellous power of winning its way into the consciences of men.
Edward Montet,
"La Propagande Chretienne et ses Adversaries Musulmans" Paris 1890, quoted by T.W. Arnold in *The Preaching of Islam*, London 1913, pp 413-414.

I am not a Muslim in the usual sense, though I hope I am a "Muslim" as "one surrendered to God"; but I believe that embedded in the Qura'n and other expressions of the Islamic vision are vast stores of divine truth from which I and other accidentals have still much to learn; and 'Islam is certainly a strong contender for the supplying of the basic framework of the one religion of the future'.
W. Montgomery Watt, *Islam and Christianity Today.*
London 1983, p. IX.

Chapter Four

WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT MUḤAMMAD

During the centuries of the crusades, all sorts of slanders were invented against the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). But with the birth of the modern age, marked with religious tolerance and freedom of thought, there has been a great change in the approach of Western authors in their delineation of his life and character. The views of some non-Muslim scholars regarding Prophet Muhammad, given at the end, justify this opinion.

But the West has still to go a step forward to discover the greatest reality about Muhammad and that is his being the true and the last Prophet of God for the whole humanity. In spite of all its objectivity an enlightenment there has been no sincere and objective attempt by the West to understand the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH). It is so strange that very glowing tributes are paid to him for his integrity and achievement but his claim of being the Prophet of God has been rejected explicity or implicitly. It is here that a searching of the heart is required, and a review of the so-called objectivity is needed. The following glaring facts from the life of Muhammad (PBUH) have been furnished to facilitate an unbiased, logical and objective decision regarding his Prophethood.

Up to the age of forty Muhammad was not known as a statesman, a preacher or an orator. He was never seen discussing the principles of metaphysics, ethics, law, politics, economics or sociology. No doubt he possessed an excellent character, charming manners and was highly cultured. Yet there was nothing so deeply striking and so radically extraordinary in him that would make men expect something great and revolutionary from him in the future. But when he came out of Cave (HIRA) with a new message, he was completely transformed. Is it possible for such a person of the above qualtities to turn all of a sudden 'an impostor' and clain to be the Prophet of Allah and invite all the rage of his people? One might ask: for what reason did he suffer all those hardships? His people offered to accept him as their King and to lay all the

riches of the land at his feet if only he would leave the preaching of his religion. But he chose to refuse their tempting offers and go on preaching his religion single-handedly in face of all kinds of insults, social boycott and even physical assault by his own people. Was it not only God's support and his firm will to disseminate the messge of Allah and his deep-rooted belief that ultimately Islam would emerge as the only way of life for the humanity, that he stood like a mountain in the fact of all oppositions and conspiracies to eliminate him? Furthermore, had he come with a design of rivalry with the Christians and the Jews, why should he have made belief in Jesus Christ and Moses and other Prophets of God (peace be upon them), a basic requirement of faith without which no one could be a Muslim?

Is it not an incontrovertible proof of his Prophethood that in spite of being unlettered and having led a very normal and quiet life for forty years, when he began preaching his message, all of Arabia stood in awe and wonder and was bewitched by his wonderful eloquence and oratory? It was so matchless that the whole legion of Arab poets, preachers and orators of highest calibre failed to bring foth its equivalent. And above all, how could he then pronounce truths of a scientific nature contained in the Qur'an that no other human-being could possibly have developed at that time?

Last but not least, why did he lead a hard life even after gaining power and authority? Just ponder over the words he uttered while dying: "We the community of the Prophets are not inherited. Whatever we leave is for charity". As a matter of fact Muhammad (PBUH) is the last link of the chain of Prophets sent in different lands and times since the very beginning of the human life of this planet.

If greatness of purpose, smallness of means, and astounding results are the three criteria of human genius, who could date to compare any great man in Modern history with Muhammad? The most men created arms laws and empires only. The founded, if anything at all, no more than material powers which often crumbled away before their eyes. This man moved not only armies, legislations, empires, peoples and dynasties, but millions of men in

one-third of the then inhabited world; and more than that, he moved the altars, the gods, the religions, the ideas, the beliefs and souls.....his forbearance in victory, his ambition, which was entirely devoted to one idea and in no manner striving for an empire, his endless prayers, his mystic conversations with God, his death and his triumph after death; all these attest not to an imposture but to a firm conviction which gave him the power to restore a dogma. This dogma was twofold, the unity of God and the immateriality of God; the former telling what God is, the latter telling what God is not; the one overthrowing false gods with the sword, the other starting an idea with the words.

Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, of a cult without images; the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may well ask, is there any man greater than he?

Lamartine, *Histoire de la Turquie,* Paris 1854
Vol II, pp. 276-77

It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder; the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca and Medina is preserved, after the revolutions of twelve centuries by the Indian, the African and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran....The Mahometans have uniformly withstood the temptation of reducing the object of thir faith and devotion to a level with the senses and imaginaton of man. 'I believe in One God and Mahomet the Apostle of God', is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol; the honours of the prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtue; and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion.

Edward Gibbon and Simon Ocklay, *History of the Saracen Empire,*
London 1870, p. 54

He was Ceasar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without Pope's pretentions,

Ceasar without the legions of Ceasar: without a standing army without a body-guard, without a palace, without a fixed revenue; if ever any man had the right to say that he ruled by the right divine, it was Mohammed, for he had all the power without its instruments and without its supports.
Bosworth Smith, *Mohammad and Mohammadanism,*
London 1874, p. 92.

It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme. And although in what I put to you I shall say many things which will be familiar to many, yet I myself feel whenever I re-read them, a new way of admiration, a new sense of reverence for that almighty Arabian teacher.
Annie Besant, *The Life and Teachings of Muhammad,*
Madras 1932, p. 4

His readiness to undergo persecutions for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement - all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems than it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad.
W. Montgomery, *Mohammad at Mecca,*
Oxfort, 1953, p. 52.

Muhammad, the inspired man who founded Islam, was born about AD570 into an Arabian tribe that worshipped idols. Orphaned at birth, he was always particularly solicitous of the poor and needy, the widow and the orphan, the slave and the downtrodden. At twenty he was already a successful businessman, and soon became director of camel caravans for a wealthy widow. When he reached twenty-five his employer, recognizing his merit,

proposed marriage. Even though she was fifteen years older, he married her, and as long as she lived remained a devoted husband.
Like almost every major prophet before him, Mohammad fought shy of serving as a transmitter of God's word, sensing his own inadequacy. But the angel commanded 'Read'. So far as we know, Muhammad was unable to read or write, but he began to dictate those inspired words which would soon revolutionize a large segment of the earth: "There is one God".
In all things Muhammad was profoundly practical. When his beloved son Ibrahim died, an eclipse occurred, and rumours of God's personal condolence quickly arose. Whereupon Muhammad is said to have announced, 'An eclipse is a phenomenon of nature. It is foolish to attribute such things to the death or birth of a human-being'.
At Muhammad's own death an attempt was made to deify him, but the man who was to become his administrative successor killed the hysteria with one of the noblest speeches in religious history: 'If there are any among you that worshipped Muhammad, he is dead. But if it is God you worshipped, He lives forever'.
James A. Michener, *'Islam: The Misunderstood Religion'*
in *the Reader's Digest* (American Edition) for May, 1955, pp 68-70.

My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the religious and secular level.
Michael H. Hart, *The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History,*
New York: Hart Publishing Company, Inc. 1978, p33.

Chapter Five

MORAL SYSTEM OF ISLAM

Islam has laid down some universal fundamental rights for humanity as a whole, which are to be observed and respected under all circumstances. To achieve these rights Islam provides not only legal safeguards but also a very effective moral system. Thus whatever leads to the welfare of the individual or the society is morally good in Islam and whatever is injurious is morally bad. Islam attaches so much importance to the love of God and love of man that it warms against too much formalism. We read in the Qura'n:

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in God and the Last Day and the Angels, and the Book and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask; and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayers, and practice regular charity; to fulfil the contracts which you made; and to be firm and patient in pain (or suffering) and adversity and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-fearing (2:177)

We are given a beautiful description of the righteous and God-fearing man in these verses. He should obey salutary regulations, but he should fix his gaze on the love of God and the love of his fellow-men.

We are given four heads:
a) Our faith should be true and sincere
b) We must be prepared to show it in deeds of charity to our fellow men
c) We must be good citizens, supporting social organizations and
d) Our own individual soul must be firm and unshaken in all circumstances.

This is the standard by which a particular mode of conduct is judged and classified as good or bad. This standard of judgement provides the nucleus around which the whole moral conduct should revolve. Before laying down any moral injunctions Islam seeks to firmly implant in man's heart the conviction that his dealings are with God who sees him at all times and in all places; that he may hide himself from the whole world but not from Him; that he may deceive everyone but cannot deceive God; that he can flee from the clutches of anyone else but not from God's.

Thus, by setting God's pleasure as the objective of man's life, Islam has furnished the highest possible standard of morality. This is bound to provide limitless avenues for the moral evolution of humanity. By making divine revelations as the primary source of knowledge it gives permanence and stability to the moral standards which afford reasonable scope for genuine adjustments, adaptations and innovations though not for preversions, wild variation, atomistic relativism or moral fluidity. It provides a sanction to marality in the love and fear of God, which will impell man to obey the moral law even without any external pressure. Through belief in God and the Day of Judgement it furnishes a force which enables a person to adopt the moral conduct with earnestness and sincerity, with all the devotion of heart and soul.

It does not, through a false sense of originality and innovation, provide any novel moral virtues nor does it seek to minimise the importance of the well-known moral norms, nor does it give exaggerated importance to some and neglect others without cause. It takes up all the commonly known moral virtues and with a sense of balance and proportion it assigns a suitable place and function to each one of them in the total scheme of life. It widens the scope of man's individual and collective life - his domestic associations, his civic conduct and his activities in the political, economic, legal, educational and social realms. It covers his life from home to society, from the dining-table to the battle-field and peace conferences, literally from the cradle to the grave. In short

no sphere of life is exempt from the universal and comprehensive application of the moral principles of Islam. It makes morality reign supreme and ensures that the affairs of life, instead of dominated by selfish desires and petty interests, should be regulated by norms of marality.

It stipulates for man a system of life which is based on all good and is free from all evil. It invokes the people, not only to practice virtue, but also to establish virtue and eradicate vice, to bid good and to forbid wrong. It wants that the verdict of conscience should prevail and virtue must not be subdued to play second fiddle to evil. Those who respond to this call are gathered together into a community and given the name *Muslim*. And the singular object underlying the formation of this community *(Ummah)* is that it should make an organized effort to establish and enforce goodness and suppress and eradicate evil.

Here we furnish some basic moral teachings of Islam for various aspects of a Muslim's life. They cover the broad spectrum of personal moral conduct of a Muslim as well as his social responsibilities.

God-Consciousness

The Qura'n mentions it as the highest of a Muslim: *The most honourable among you in the sight of God is the one who is most God conscious. (49:13)*

Humility, modesty, control of passions and desires, truthfulness, integrity, patience, steadfastness, and fulfilling one's promises are moral values which are emphasized again and again in the Qura'n. We read in the Qura'n:
And God loves those who are firm and steadfast. (3:146)
And vie with one aother to attain to your Sustainer's forgiveness and to a Paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth, which awaits the God-conscious, who spend for charity in time of plenty and in time of hardship, and restrain their anger, and pardon their fellow men, for God loves those who do good. (3:133-134)

Establish regular prayer, enjoin what is just, and forbid what is wrong; and bear patiently whatever may befall you; for this is true constancy. And do not swell your cheek (with pride) at men, nor walk in insolence on the earth for God does not love any man proud and boastful. And be moderate in your pace an lower your voice; for the harshest of sounds, indeed, is the braying of the ass. (31:18-19)

In a way which summarizes the moral behaviour of a Muslim, the prophet (PBUH) said: My Sustainer has given me nine commands: to remain conscious of God, whether in private or in public; to speak justly, whether angry or pleased; to show moderation both when poor and when rich; to re-unite friendship with those who have broken it off with me; to give to him who refuses me; that my silence should be occupied with thought; that my looking should be an admonition; and that I should command what is right.

Social Responsibilities

The teachings of Islam concerning social responsibilities are based on kindness and consideration of others. Since a broad injunction to be kind is likely to be ignored in specific situations, Islam lays emphasis on specific acts of kindness and defines the responsibilities and rights of various relationships. In a widening circle of relationship, then, our first obligation is to our immediate family - parents, husband or wife and children, then to other relatives, neighbours, friends and acquaintances, orphans and widows, the needy of the community, our fellow Muslims, all our fellow human-beings and animals.

Parents

Respect and care for parents is very much stressed in the Islamic teaching and is a very important part of a Muslims expression of faith.

Your Sustainer has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life-time,

do not say to them a word of contempt nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour. And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility and say: My Sustainer! Bestow on them Your mercy, even as they cherished me in childhood. (17:23-24)

Other Relatives

And render to the relatives their due rights, as also to those in need, and to the traveller; and do not squander your wealth in the manner of spendthrift. (17:26)

Neighbours

The Prophet (PBUH) has said:

He is not a believer who eats his fill when his neighbour beside him is hungry; and:

He does not believe whose neighbours are not safe from his injurious conduct.

Actually, according to the Qura'n and *Sunnah* a Muslim has to discharge his moral responsibility not only to his parents, relatives and neighbours but to the entire mankind, animals and useful trees and plants. For example, hunting of birds and animals for the sake of game is not permitted. Similarly cutting trees and plants which yield fruit is forbidden unless there is a very pressing need for it.

Thus, on the basic moral characteristics, Islam builds a higher system of morality by virtue of which mankind can realise its greatest potential. Islam purifies the soul from self-seeking egotism, tyranny, wantonness and indiscipline. It creates God-fearing men, devoted to their ideals, possessed of piety, abstinence and discipline and uncompromising with falsehood. It induces feelings of moral responsibility and fosters the capacity for self-control. Islam generates kindness, generosity, mercy, sympathy, peace, disinterested goodwill, scrupulous fairness and truthfulness toward all creation in all situations. It nourishes noble qualities from which only good may be expected.

Chapter Six

LIFE AFTER DEATH

The question of whether there is a life after death does not fall under the jurisdiction of science as science is concerned only with classification and analysis of sense data. Moreover, man has been busy with scientific enquiries and research, in the modern sense of the term, only for the last few centuries, while he has been familiar with the concept of life after death since times immemorial. All the prophets of God called their people to worship God and to believe in life after death. They laid so much emphasis on the belief in life after death that even a slight doubt in it meant denying God and made all other beliefs meaningless. The very fact that all the prophets of God have dealt with this metaphysical question of life after death so confidently and so uniformly - the gap between their ages being thousands of years - goes to prove that the source of their knowledge of life after death as proclaimed by them all, was the same, i.e., Divine revelation. We also know that these prophets of God were greatly opposed by their people, mainly on the issue of life after death as their people thought it impossible. But in spite of opposition the prophets won so many sincere followers. The question arises what made those followers forsake the established beliefs, traditions and customs of their forefathers notwithstanding the risk of being totally alienated from their own community? The simple answer is: they made use of their faculties of mind and heart and realized the truth. Did they realize the truth through perceptual consciousness? Not so, as perceptual experience of life after death is impossible. Actually God has given man besides perceptual consciousness, rational, aesthetic, and moral consciousness too. It is this consciousness that guides man regarding realities that cannot be verified through sensory data. That is why all the prophets of God while calling people to believe in God and life after death, appeal to the aesthetic, moral and rational consciousness of man. For example, when the idolators of Makkah denied even the possibility of life after death, the Qura'n

exposed the weakness of their stand by advancing very logical and rational arguments in support of it:

And he has coined for us a similitude, and has forgotten the fact of his creation, saying: who will revive these bones when they have rotten away?

Say: He will revive them who produced them at the first, for He is the knower of every creation. Who has appointed for you fire from the green tree, and behold! you kindle from it.

Is not He who created the heavens an the earth, able to create the like of them? yes, and He is indeed the Supreme Creator, the All-knowing. (36:78-81)

At another occasion the Qura'n very clearly says that the disbelievers have no sound basis for their denial of life after death. It is based on pure conjectures:

They say, 'There is nothing but our present life; we die, and we live, and nothing but Time destroys us'. Of that they have no knowledge; they merely conjecture. And when our revelations are recited to them, their only argument is that they say, 'Bring us our fathers, if you speak truly'. (45:24-25)

Surely God will raise all the dead. But God has his own plan of things. A day will come when the whole universe will be destroyed and then again the dead will be resurrected to stand before God. That day will be the beginning of the life that will never end, and that Day every person will be rewarded by God according to his or her good or evil deed.

The explanation that the Qura'n gives about the necessity of life after death is what moral consciousness of man demands. Actually if there is no life after death, the very belief in God becomes irrelevant or even if one believes in God, that would be an unjust and indifferent God: having once created man not concerned with his fate. Surely, God is just. He will punish the tyrants whose crimes are beyond count: having killed hundreds of innocent persons, created great corruptions in the society, enslaved numerous persons to serve their whims etc. Man having a very short span of life in this world, and this physical world too being not eternal, punishments or rewards equal to the evil or noble deeds of persons are not possible here. The Qura'n very emphatically states that the Day of judgement must come and God will decide about the fate

of each soul according to his or her record of deeds:

Those who disbelieve say: The hour will never come unto us. Say: Nay, by my Lord, but it is coming unto you surely. (He is) the Knower of the Unseen. Not an atom's weight, or less than that or greater, escapes Him in the heavens or in the earth, but it is in a clear Record. That He may reward those who believe and do good works. For them is pardon and a rich provision.

But those who strive against our revelations, challenging (Us), theirs will be a painful doom of wrath. (34:3-5)

The Day of Resurrection will be the Day when God's attributes of Justice and Mercy will be in full manifestation. God will shower His mercy on those who suffered for His sake in the worldly life, believing that an eternal bliss was waiting for them. But those who abused the bounties of God, caring nothing for the life to come, will be in the most miserable state. Drawing a comparison between them, the Qura'n says:

Is he, then, to whom we have promised a goodly promise the fulfilment of which he will meet, like the one whom We have provided with the good things of this life, and then on the Day of Resurrection he will be of those who will be brought arraigned before God? (28:61)

The Qura'n also states that this Worldly life is a preparation for the eternal life after death. But those who deny it become slaves of their passions and desires, make fun of virtuous and God-conscious persons. Such persons realize their folly only at the time of their death and wish to be given a further chance in the world but in vain. Their miserable state at the time of death, and the horror of the Day of Judgement, and the eternal bliss guaranteed to the sincere believers are very beautifully mentioned in the following verses of the Holy Qura'n:

Until, when death comes unto one of them, he says, 'My Lord send me back, that I may do right in that which I have left behind!' But nay! It is but a word that he speaks; and behind them is a barrier until the day when they are raised. And when the Trumpet is blown there will be no kinship among them that day, nor will they ask of one another. Then those scales are heavy, they are successful. And those whose scales are light are those who lose their souls, in hell

abiding the fire burns their faces and they are glum therein. (23:99-104)
The belief in life after death not only guarantees success in the Hereafter but also makes this world full of peace and happiness by making individuals most responsible and dutiful in their activities.
Think of the people of Arabia. Gambling, wine, tribal feuds, plundering and murdering were their main traits when they had no belief in life after death. But as soon as they accepted the belief in the One God and life after death they became the most disciplined nation of the world. They gave up their vices, helped each other in hours of need, and settled all their disputes on the basis of justice and equality. Similarly the denial of life after eath has its consequences not only in the Hereafter but also in this world. When a nation as a whole denies it, all kinds of evils and corruptions become rampant in that society and ultimately it is destroyed. The Qura'n mentions the terrible end of 'Aad, Thamud and the Pharaoh in some detail:
(The tribes of) Thamud and 'Aad disbelieved in the judgement to come. As for Thamud, they were destoryed by the lightning, and as for 'Aad, they were destroyed by a fierce roaring wind, which He imposed on them for seven long nights and eight long days so that you might see the people laid prostrate in it as if they were the stumps of fallen down palm trees.
Now do you see remnant of them? Pharaoh likewise and those before him, and the subverted cities. They committed errors and they rebelled against the Messenger of their Lord, and He seized them with a surpassing grip. Lo, when the waters rose, We bore you in the running ship that We might make it a reminder for you and for heeding ears to hold. So when the Trumpet is blown with a single blast and the earth and the mountains are lifted up and crushed with a single blow, then on that day, the Terror shall come to pass, and the heaven shall be split for upon that day it shall be very frail. Then as for him who is given his book in his right hand, he shall say 'Here take and read my book! Certainly I thought that I should encounter my reckoning'. So he shall be in a pleasing life in a lofty garden, its clusters nigh to gather.

'Eat and drink with wholesome appetite for that you did long ago, in the days gone by'.
But as for him who is given his book in his left hand, he shall say: 'Would that I had not been given my book and not known my reckoning! Would it have been the end!
My wealth has not availed me, my authority is gone from me'. (69:4-39)

Thus there are very convincing reasons to believe in life after death.

FIRSTLY all the prophets of God have called their people to believe in it.

SECONDLY whenever a human society is built on the basis of this belief, it has been the most ideal and peaceful society, free of social and moral evils.

THIRDLY history bears witness that whenever this belief is rejected collectively by a group of people in spite of the repeated warning of the prophet, the group as a whole has been punished by God even in this world.

FOURTHLY moral, aesthetic and rational faculities of man endorse the possibility of life after death.

FIFTHLY God's attributes of Justice and Mercy have no meaning if there is no life after death.

Chapter Seven

PROPHETHOOD IN ISLAM

Prophethood is not unknown to heavenly revealed religions, such as Judaism and Christianity. In Islam, however, it has a special status and significance. According to Islam, Allah created man for a noble purpose: to worship Him and lead a virtuous life based on His teachings of guidance. How would man know his role and the purpose of his existence unless he received clear and practical instructions of what Allah wants him to do? Here comes the need for prophethood. Thus Allah had chosen from every nation a prophet or more to convey His Message to people.

One might ask: How were the prophets chosen and who were entitled to this great honour?

Prophethood is Allah's blessing and favour that He may bestow on Whom He wills. However, from surveying the various messengers throughout history, three features of a prophet may be recognized:

1. He is the best in his community morally and intellectually. This is necessary because the prophet's life serves as a model for his followers. His personality should attract people to accept his message rather than drive them away by his imperfect character. After receiving the message he is infallible. That is, he would not commit any sin. He might do some minor mistakes which are usually corrected by revelation.

2. He is supported by miracles to prove that he is not an impostor. Those miracles are granted by the power and permission of God and are usually in the field in which his people excell and are recognized as superiors. We might illustrate this by quoting the major miracles of the three prophets of the major world religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Moses' contemporaries were excellent in magic. So his major miracle was to defeat the

best magicians of Egypt of his days. Jesus's contemporaries were recognised as skilful physicians. Therefore his miracles were to raise the dead and cure the incurable diseases. The Arabs, the contemporaries of the prophet Muhammad, were known for their eloquence and magnificent poetry. So prophet Muhammad's major miracle was the Qura'n, the equivalent of which the whole legion of the Arab poets and orators could not produce despite the repeated challenge from the Qura'n itself. Again Muhammad's miracle has something special about it. All previous miracles were limited by time and place, i.e., they were shown to specific people at a specific time. Not so the miracle of Muhammad - the Qura'n. It is a universal and everlasting miracle. Previous generations witnessed it and future generations will witness its miraculous nature in term of its style, content and spiritual uplifting. These still can be tested and will thereby prove the divine origin of the Qura'n.

3. Every prophet states clearly that what he receives is not of his own but from God for the well-being of mankind. He also confirms what was revealed before him and what may be revealed after him. A prophet fdoes this to show that he is simply conveying the message which is entrusted to him by the One True God of all people in all ages. So the message is one in essence and for the same purpose. Therefore, it should not deviate from what was revealed before him or what might come after him.

Prophets are necessary for conveying God's instructions and guidance to mankind. We have no way of knowing why we were created? What will happen to us after death? Is there any life after death? Are we accountable for our actions? In other words, is there any reward or punishment for our deeds in this life? These and so many other questions about God, angels, paradise, hell etc., cannot be answered without the direct revelation from the Creator and Knower of the unseen. Those answers must be authentic and must be brought by individuals whom we trust and respect. That is why, messengers are the

select of their societies in terms of moral conducts and intellectual abilities. Hence the slanderous Biblical stores about some of the great prophets are not accepted by Muslims. As for example, when Lot is reported to have committed fornication while drunk, with his daughters, or that David sent one of his leader to death to marry his wife. Prophets to Muslims are greater than what these stories indicate. These stories cannot be true from the Islamic point of view.

The prophets are also miraculously supported by God and instructed by Him to affirm the continuity of the message.

The content of the prophet's message to mankind can be summarized as follows:

a) Clear concept about God: His attributes, His creation, what should and should not be ascribed to Him.

b) Clear idea bout the unseen world, the angels, jinn (spirits), Paradise and Hell.

c) Why has God created us? What does He want from us and what reward or punishment for obeying or disobeying Him?

d) How to run our societies according to His will? That is, clear instructions and laws that, when applied correctly and honestly, will result into a happy and ideal society.

It is clear from the above discussion that there is no substitute for prophets Even nowadays with advancement of science, the only authentic source of information about the supernatural world is revelation. Guidance cannot be obtained neither from science nor from mystical experience. The first is too materialistic and too limited; the second is too subjective and frequently too misleading. Now one might ask:

How many prophets had God sent to humanity? We do not know for sure. Some Muslim Scholars have suggested 240 thousand prophets. We are only sure of what is clearly mentioned in the Qura'n, that is, God has sent a messenger (or more) to every nation. That is because it is one of God's principles that he will never call a people to account unless He has made clear to them what to do and what not to do. The Qura'n mentions the names of 25 prophets and indicates that there have been others who were not mentioned to the prophet Muhammad. These 25 include Noah, the man of the Ark, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. These five are the greatest among God's messengers. They are called ( ) 'the resolute' prophets.

An outstanding aspect of Islamic belief in prophethood is that Muslims believe in and respect all the messengers of God with no exceptions. Since all the prophets came from the same One God, for the same purpose - to lead mankind to God - belief in them all is essential and logical; accepting some and rejecting others has to be based on misconceptions of the prophet's role or on racial bias. The Muslims are the only people in the world who consider the belief in all the prophets of God an article of faith. Thus the Jews respect Jesus Christ and Muhammad (PBUT); the Christians reject Muhammad (PBUH) and in reality reject Moses because they do not abide by his laws. The Muslims accept them all as messengers of God who brought guidance to mankind. However, the revelation which those prophets brought from God had been tampered with in one way or the other. The belief in all the messengers of God is enjoined on the Muslims by the Qura'n:

Say (O Muslims): we believe in Allah and that which is revealed to us and that which was revealed to Abraham and Ismael, and Isaac and Jacob, and their children, and that which Moses and Jesus received and that the prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them and unto Him we have surrendered. (2:136)

The Qura'n continues in the following verses to instruct the Muslims that this is the true and impartial belief. If other nations believe in the same, they are following in the right track. If they do not, they must be following their own

whims and biases and God will take care of them. Thus we read:

And if they believe in what you believe, then are they rightly guided. But if they turn away, then they are in disunity, and Allah will suffice you against them. He is the Hearer, the Knower. This is God's religion and Who is better than God in religion) (2:137-38)

There are, at least, two important points related to prophethood that need to be clarified. These points concern the roles of Jesus and Muhammad as prophets who are usually misunderstood.

The Qura'nic account of Jesus emphatically rejects the concept of his 'Divinity' and 'Divine Sonship' and presents him as one of the great prophets of God. The Qura'n makes it clear that the birth of Jesus without a father does not make him the son of God and mentions in this respect Adam who was created by God without a father and mother:

Truly the likeness of Jesus, in God's sight is an Adam's likeness; He created him of dust, then said He unto him, "Be", and he was. (3:59)

Like other prophets Jesus also performed miracles. For example, he raised the dead and cured the blind and the lepers, but while showing these miracles he always made it clear that it was all from God.

Actually the misconceptions about the personality and mission of Jesus found a way among his followers because the divine message that he preached was not recorded during his presence in the world, rather it was recorded after about a lapse of about a hundred years. According to the Qura'n he was sent to the children of Israel; he confirmed the validity of the Torah which was revealed to Moses and he also brought the glad tidings of a final messenger after him.

And when Jesus son of Mary said, 'children of Israel, I am indeed the Messenger to you, confirming the Torah that is before me, and giving good tidings of a Messenger who shall come after me, ***whose name shall be the praised one.*** *(61:6)* (The bold portion is the translation of **Ahmad** which is prophet Muhammad's name).

However, the majority of the Jews rejected his ministry. They plotted against his life and in their opinion curcified him. But the Qura'n refutes this opinion and says that they neither killed him nor crucified him, rather he was raised up to God. There is a verse in the Qura'n, which implies that Jesus will come back and all the Christians and Jews will believe in him before he dies. This is also supported by authentic sayings of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

The last prophet of God, Muhammad, was born in Arabia in the sixth century C.E. Up to the age of forty, people of Makkah knew him only a man of excellent character and cultured manners and called him AL-AMEEN (the trustworthy). He also did not know that he was soon to be made a prophet and receiver of revelation from God. He called the idolators of Makkah to worship the only one God and accept him as His prophet. The revelation that he received was preserved in his lifetime in the memory of his companions and was also recorded on pieces of palm leaves, leather etc. Thus the Qura'n that is found today is the same that was revealed to him, not a syllable of it has been altered as God Himself has guaranteed its preservation. This Qura'n claims to be the book of guidance for whole humanity for all times, and mentions Muhammad as the last prophet of God.

Chapter Eight

CONCEPT OF WORSHIP IN ISLAM

The concept of worship in Islam is misunderstood by many people including some Muslims. Worship is commonly taken to mean performing ritualist acts such as prayers, fasting, charity, etc. This limited understanding of worship is only one part of the meaning of worship in Islam. That is why the traditional definition of worship in Islam is a comprehensive definition that includes almost everything in any individual's activities. The definition goes something like this:

"Worship is an all inclusive term for all that God loves of external and internal sayings and actions of a person." In other words, worship is everything one says or does for the pleasure of Allah. This, of course, includes rituals as well as beliefs, social activities, and personal contributions to the welfare of one's fellow human beings.

Islam looks at the individual as a whole. He is required to submit himself completely to Allah, as the Qura'n instructed the prophet Muhammad to do: "Say (O Muhammad) my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death belong to Allah; He has no partner and I am ordered to be among those who submit i.e.; Muslims". The natural result of this submission is that all one's activities should conform to the instructions of the one to whom the person is submitting. Islam being a way of life, requires that its followers model their life according to its teachings in every respect, religious or otherwise. This might sound strange to some people who think of religion as a personal relation between the individual and God, having no impact on one's activities outside rituals.

As a matter of fact Islam does not think much of mere rituals when they are performed mechanically and have no influence on one's inner life. The Qura'n addresses the believers and their neighbours from among the people of the

Book who were arguing with them about the change of the direction of Qibla in the following verse:

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces toward the East or the West, but righteous is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the prophets, and gives his beloved money to the relatives and the orphans and the needy and for the ransoming of the captives an who observed prayer and pays the poor-due; and those who fulfil their promises when they have made one, and the patient in poverty and affliction and the steadfast in time of war; it is those who have proved truthful and it is those who are the God-fearing. (2:177)

The deeds in the above verse are deeds of righteousness and they are only a part of worship. The prophet told us about faith, which is the basis of worship, that it "is made up of sixty and some branches: the highest of which is the belief in the Oneness of Allah, i.e. there is no God but Allah and the lowest in the scale of worship is removing obstacles and dirt from people's way".

Decent work is considered in Islam a type of worship. The prophet said: "Whoever finds himself at the nightfall tired of his wok, God will forgive his sins." Seeking knowledge is one of the highest types of worship. The prophet told his companions that "seeking knowledge is a (religious) duty on every Muslim." In another saying he said: "Seeking knowledge for one hour is better than praying for seventy years." Social courtesy and co-operation are part of worship when done for the sake of Allah as the prophet told us: "Receiving your friend with a smile is a type of charity, helping a person to load his animal is a charity and putting some water in your neighbour's bucket is a charity".

It is worth noting that even performing one's duties is considered a sort of worship. The prophet told us that whatever one spends for his family is a type of charity; he will be rewarded for it if he aquires it through legal means. Kindness

to the members of one's family is an act of worship as when one puts a piece of food in his spouce's mouth as the prophet informed us. Not only this but even the acts we enjoy doing very much, when they are performed according to the instructions of the prophet, they are considered as acts of worship. The prophet told his companions that they will be rewarded even for having sexual intercourse with their wives. The companions were astonished and asked: "How are we going to be rewarded for doing something we enjoy very much?" The prophet asked them: "Suppose you satisfy you desires illegally, don't you think that you will be punished for that?" They replied, "yes." "So" he said, "by satisfying it legally with your wives you are rewarded for it." This means they are acts of worship.

Thus Islam does not consider sex a dirty thing that one should avoid. It is dirty and sin only when it is satisfied outside marital life.

It is clear, from the previous discussion that the concept of worship in Islam is a comprehensive concept that includes all the positive activities of the individual. This of course is in agreement with the all inclusive nature of Islam as a way of life. It regulates the human life on all levels: the individual, the social, the economic, the political and the spiritual. That is why Islam provides guidance to the smallest details of one's life on all these levels. Thus following these details is following Islamic instructions in that specific area. It is a very encouraging element when one realises that all his activities are considered by God as acts of worship. This should lead the individual to seek Allah's pleasure in his actions and always try to do them in the best possible manner whether he is watched by his superiors or he is alone. There is always the permanent supervisor, who knows everything namely, Allah.

Discussing the non-ritual worship in Islam first does not mean underevaluating the importance of the ritual ones. Actually ritual worships, if performed in true spirit, elevate man morally and spiritually and enable him to carry on his

activities in all walks of life according to the Guidance of God. Among ritual worships, **Salah** (ritual prayer) occupies the key position for two reasons. Firstly, it is the distinctive mark of a believer. Secondly, it prevents an individual from all sorts of abominations and vices by providing him chances of direct communion with his Creator five times a day, wherein he renews his covenant with God and seeks His guidance again and again: "You alone we worship and to You alone we turn for help. Guide us to the straight path" (i:4-5). Actually Salah is the first practical manifestation of Faith and also the foremost of the basic conditions for the success of the believers:
Successful indeed are believers who are humble in their prayers. (23:1-2)

The same fact has been emphasized by the propeht (PBUH) in a different way. He says:

*Those who offer theis **Salah** with great care and punctuality, will find it a light, a proof of their Faith and cause of their salvation on the Day of Judgement.*

After **Salah, Zakah** (poor-due) is an important pillar of Islam. In the Quran **Salah** and **Zakah** mostly have been mentioned together. Like **Salah, Zakah** is a manifestation of faith that affirms that God is the sole owner of everything in the universe, and what men hold is a trust in their hand over which God made them trustees to discharge it as He has laid down:

Believe in Allah and His messenger and spend of that which He made you trustees. (57:7)

In this respect **Zakah** is an act of devotion which, like prayer, brings the believer nearer to his Lord.

Apart from this, **Zakah** is a means of redistribution of wealth in a way that reduces difference between classes and groups. It makes a fair contribution to

social stability. By purging the soul of the rich from selfishness and the soul of the poor from envy and resentment against society, it stops up the channels leading to class hatred and makes it possible for the springs of brotherhood and solidarity to gush forth. Such stability is not merely based on the personal feelings of the rich: it stands on a firmly established right which, if the rich denied it, would be exacted by force, if necessary.

Siyam (fasting during the day time of the month of Ramadhan) is another pillar of Islam. The main function of fasting is to make the Muslim pure from "within" as other aspects of Shariah make him pure from "without." By such purity he responds to what is true and good and shuns what is false and evil. This is what we can perceive in the Qura'nic verse: "O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may gain piety." (2:183) In an authentic tradition the prophet reported Allah as saying: "He suspends eating, drinking, and gratification of his sexual passion for My sake." Thus his reward is going to be according to God's great bounty.

Fasting, then, awakens the conscience of the individual and gives it scope for exercise in a joint experience for all society at the same time, thus adding further strength to each individual. Moreover, fasting offers a compulsory rest to the over-worked human machine for the duration of one full month. Similarly, fasting reminds an individual of those who are deprived of life necessities throughout the year or throughout life. It makes him realize the suffering of others, the less fortunate brothers in Islam, and thus promotes in him a sense of sympathy and kindness to them.

Lastly, we come to **Al-Hajj** (pilgramage to the House of God in Makka). This very important pillar of Islam, manifests a unique unity, dispelling all kinds of differences. Muslims from all corners of the world, wearing the same dress, respond to the call of Hajj in one voice and language: LABBAIK ALLA HUMMA LABBAIK (Here I am at your service O Lord!). In Hajj there is an exer-

cise of strict self-discipline and control where not only sacred things are revered, but even the life of plants and birds is made inviolable so that everything lives in safety: "And he that venerates the sacred things of God, it shall be better for him with his Lord" (22:30), "And he that venerates the waymarks of God, it surely is from devotion of the heart." (22.32)

Pilgrimage gives an opportunity to all Muslims from all groups, classes, organizations and governments from all over the Muslim world to meet annually in a great congress. The time and venue of this congress has been set by their one God. Invitation to attend is open to every Muslim. No one has the power to bar anyone. Every Muslim who attends is guaranteed full safety and freedom as long as he himself does not violate its safety.

Thus, worship in Islam, whether ritual or non-ritual, trains the individual in such a way that he loves his Creator most and thereby gains an unyielding will and spirit to wipe out all evil and oppression from the human society and make the word of God dominant in the world.

Chapter Nine

CONCEPT OF GOD IN ISLAM

It is a known fact that every language has one or more terms that are used in reference to God and sometimes to lesser deities. This is not the case with Allah. Allah is the personal name of the One true God. Nothing else can be called Allah. The term has no plural or gender. This shows its uniquencess when compared with the word god which can be made plural, gods or femine, goddess. It is interesting to notice that Allah is the personal name of God in Aramaic, the language of Jesus and a sister language of Arabic.

The One true God is a reflection of the unique concept that Islam associates with God. To a Muslim Allah is the Almighty, Creator and Sustainer of the universe, Who is similar to nothing and nothing is comparible to Him. The prophet Muhammad was asked by his contemporaries about Allah; the answer came directly from God Himself in the form of a short chapter of the Qura'n, which is considered the essence of the unity or the motto of monotheism. This is chapter 112 which reads:

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
Say (O Muhammad) He is God the One God, the Everlasting Refuge, who has not begotten, nor has been begotten, and equal to Him is not anyone.

Some non-Muslims allege that God in Islam is a stern and cruel God who demands to be obeyed fully. He is not loving and kind. Nothing can be further from truth than this allegation. It is enough to know that, with the exception of one, each of the 114 chapters of the Qura'n begins with the verse: "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate". In one of the sayings of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) we are told that "God is more loving and kinder than a mother to her dear child".

But God is also just. Hence evildoers and sinners must have their share of punishment and the virtuous His bounties and favours. Actually God's attribute of Mecy has full manifestation in His attribute of Justice. People suffering throughout their life for His sake and people oppressing and exploiting other people all their life should not receive similar treatment from their Lord. Expecting similar treatment for them will amount to negting the very belief in the accountability of man in the Hereafter and thereby negating all the incentives for a moral and virtuous life in this world. The following Qura'nic verses are very clear and straight forward in this respect.

Verily, for the Righteous are gardens of Delight, in the Presence of their Lord. Shall We then treat the people of faith like the People? What is the matter with you? How judge you? (68:34-36)

Islam rejects characterizing God in any human form or depicting Him as favouring certain individuals or nations on the basis of wealth, power or race. He created the human beings as equals. They may distinguish themselves and get His favour through virtue and piety only.

The concept that God rested on the seventh day of creation, that God wrestled with one of His soldiers that God is an envious plotter against mankind, or that God is incarnate in any human being are considered blasphemy from the Islamic point of view.

The unique usage of Allah as a personal name of God is a reflection of Islam's emphasis on the purity of the belief in God which is the essence of the message of all God's messengers. Because of this, Islam considers associating any deity or personality with God as a deadly sin which God will never forgive, despite the fact that He may forgive all other sins.
The Creator must be of a different nature from the things created because if he is of the same nature as they are, he will be temporal and will therefore need

a maker. It follows that nothing is like Him. If the maker is not temporal, then he must be eternal. But if he is eternal, he cannot be caused, and if nothing caused him to come into existence, nothing outside him causes him to continue to exist, which means that he must be self-sufficient. And if he does not depend on anything for the continuance of his own existence, then this existence can have no end. The Creator is therefore eternal and everlasting: 'He is the first and the last'.

He is self-sufficient or self-subsistent or, to use a Qura'nic term, Al-Qayyum. The Creator does not create only in the sense of bringing things into being, He also preserves them and takes them out of existence and is the ultimate cause of whatever happens to them.

God is the Creator of everything. He is the guardian over everything. Unto Him belong the key of the heavens and the earth.
No creature is there sprawling on the earth, but its provision rests on God. He knows its lodging-place and its repository.

God's Attributes

If the Creator is eternal and everlasting, then His attributes must also be eternal and everlasting. He should not lose any of His attributes not acquire new ones. If this is so, then His attributes are absolute. Can there be more than one Creator with such absolute attributes? Can there be for example two absolutely powerful creators? A moment's thought shows that this is not feasible.

The Qura'n summarizes this argument in the following verses.
God has not taken to Himself any son, nor is there any god with Him: For then each god would have taken off that which he created and some of them would have risen up over others. And Why, were there gods in earth and heaven other than God, they (heaven and earth) would surely go to ruin.

The Oneness of God

The Qura'n reminds us of the falsity of all alleged gods.

To the worshippers of man-make objects it asks: *Do you worship what you have carved yourself or have you taken unto you others beside Him to be your protectors, even such as have no power to protect themselves?*

To the worshippers of heavenly bodies it cites the story of Abraham:

When night outspread over him he saw a star and said, "This is my Lord". But when it set he said, "I love not the setters". When he saw moon rising, he said, "This is my Lord". But when it set he said: "if my Lord does not guide me I shall surely be one of the people gone astray". When he saw the sun rising, he said, "This is my Lord; this is greater". But when it set he said, "O my people, surely I quit that you associate. I have turned my face to Him who originated the heavens and the earth; a man of pure faith, I am not of the idolators".

The Believer's Attitude

In order to be a Muslim i.e., to surrender oneself to God, it is necessary to believe in the oneness of God, in the sense of His being the only Creator, Preserver, Nourisher, etc. But this belief - later on called *Tawhid Ar-Rububiyyah* is not enough. Many of the idolators knew and believed that only the Supreme God could do all this. But that was not enough to make them Muslims. To *tawhid ar-rubbubiyyah* one must add *tawhid al'uluhiyyah* i.e., one acknowledges the fact that it is God alone who deserves to be worshipped, and thus abstains from worshipping any other thing or being.

Having achieved this knowledge of the one true God, man should constantly have faith in Him, and should allow nothing to induce him to deny truth.

When faith enters a persons's heart, it causes certain mental states which result in certain actions. Taken together these mental states and actions are the proof for true faith. The prophet said, "Faith is that which resides firmly in the heart and which is proved by deeds".

Foremost among those mental states is the feeling of gratitude towards God, which could be said to be the essence of *ibada* (Worship).

The feeling of gratitude is so important that a non-believer is called *'kafir'* which means 'one who denies a truth' and also 'one who is ungrateful'.

A believer loves, and is grateful to God for the bounties He bestowed upon him, but being aware of the fact that his good deeds, whether mental or physical, are far from being commensurate with Divine favours, he is always anxious lest God should punish him, here or in the Hereafter. He, therefore, fears Him, surrenders himself to Him and serves Him with great humility. One cannot be in such a mental state without being almost all the time mindful of God. Remembering God is thus the life force of faith, without which it fades and withers away.

The Qura'n tries to promote this feeling of gratitude by repeating the attributes of God very frequently. We find most of these attributes mentioned together in the following verses of the Qura'n:

He is God; there is no God but He. He is the Knower of the unseen and the visible; He is the All-merciful, the All-compassionate. He is God; there is no God but He. He is the King, the All-holy, the All-peace, the Guardian of Faith, the All-preserver, the All-mighty, the All-compeller, the All-sublime. Glory be to God, above that they associate! He is God, the Creator, the Maker, the shaper. To Him belong the Names Most Beautiful. All that is in the heavens and the earth magnifies Him; He is the All-mighty, the All-wise. (59:22-24)

There is no god but He, the Living, the Everlasting. Slumber seizes Him not, neither sleep; to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. Who is there that shall intercede with Him save by His leave? He knows what lies before them and what is after them, and they comprehend not anything of His

knowledge save such as He wills. His throne comprises the heavens and the earth; the preserving of them oppresses Him not; He is the All-high, the All-glorious. (2:255)

People of the Book, go not beyond the bounds in your religion, and say not as to God but the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only the Messenger of God, and His Word that He committed to Mary, and a Spirit from Him. So believe in God and His Messengers, and say not, 'Three'. Refrain; better is it for you. God is only one God. Glory be to Him - that He should have a son. (4:171)

Chapter Ten

HUMAN RIGHTS IN ISLAM

Since God is the absolute and the sole master of men and the universe, He is the sovereign Lord, the Sustainer and Nourisher, the merciful, Whose mercy enshrines all beings; and since He has given each man human dignity and honour, and breathed into him of His own spirit, it follows that, united in Him and through Him, and apart from their other human attributes, men are substantially the same and no tangible and actual distinction can be made among them, on account of their accidental differences such as nationality, colour or race. Every human being is thereby related to all others and all become one community of brotherhood in their honourable and leasant servitude to the most Compassionate Lord of the Universe. In such a heavenly atmosphere the Islamic confession of the oneness of God stands dominant and central, and necessarily entails the concept of the oneness of humanity and the brotherhood of mankind.

Although an Islamic state may be set up in any part of the earth, Islam does not seek to restrict human rights or privileges to the geographical limits of its own state. Islam has laid down some universal fundamental rights for humanity as a whole, which are to be observed and respect under all circumstances whether such a person is resident within the territory of the Islamic state or outside it, whether he is at peace with the state or at war. The Qura'n very clearly states:

O believers, be you securers of justice, witness for God.
Let not detestation for a people move you not to be equitable; be equitable - that is nearer to godfearing. (5:8)

Human blood is sacred in any case and cannot be spilled without justification. And if anyone violates this sanctity of human blood by killing a soul without justification, the Qura'n equates it to the killing of entire mankind:

...Whose slays a soul not to retaliate for a soul slain, nor for corruption done in the land, should be as if he had slain mankind altogether.

It is not permissible to oppress women, children, old people, the sick or the wounded. Women's honour and chastity are to be respected under all circumstances. The hungry person must be fed, the naked clothed and the wounded or diseased treated medically irrespective of whether they belong to the Islamic community or are from amongst its enemies.

When we speak of human rights in Islam we really mean that these rights have been granted by God; they have not been granted by any king or by any legislative assembly. The rights granted by the kings or the legislative assemblies, can also be withdrawn in the same manner in which they are conferred. The same is the case with the rights accepted and recognized by the dictators. They can confer them when they please and withdraw them when they wish; and they can openly violate them when they like. But since in Islam human rights have been conferred by God, no legislative assembly in the world or any government on earth has the right or authority to make any amendment or change in the rights conferred by God. No one has the right to abrogate them or withdraw them. Nor are they basic human rights which are conferred on paper for the sake of show and exhibition and denied in actual life when the show is over. Nor are they like philosophical concepts which have no sanctions behind them.

The charter and the proclamations and the resolutions of the United Nations cannot be compared with the rights sanctioned by God; because the former is not applicable on anybody while the latter is applicable on every believer. They are a part and parcel of the Islamic Faith. Every Muslim or administrators who claim themselves to be Muslims, will have to accept, recognize and

enforce them. If they fail to enforce them, and start denying the rights that have been guaranteed by God or make emendments and changes in them, or practically violate them while paying lip service to them, the verdict of the Holy Qura'n for such government is clear and unequivocal

Those who do not judge by what God has sent down are the disbelievers. (5:44)

Human Rights in an Islamic State

1. **The security of Life and Property:** In the address which the Prophet delivered on the occasion of the Farewell Hajj, he said: "Your lives and properties are forbidden to one another till you meet your Lord on the Day of Resurrection." The Prophet has also said about the dhimmis (the non-Muslim citizens of the Muslim state): "One who kills a man under covenant (i.e., Dhimmi) will not even smell the fragrance of Paradise."

2. **The Protection of Honour:** The Holy Qura'n lays down:

   i) who believe, do not let one (set of) people make fun of another set.
   ii) Do not defame one another
   iii) Do not insult by using nickname
   iv) Do not backbite or speak ill of one another
   (49: 11-12)

3. **Sanctity and Security of Private Life:** The Qura'n has laid down the injunction:
   i) Do not spy on one another
   ii) Do not enter any houses unless you are sure of their occupant's consent.

4. **The Security of Personal Freedom:** Islam has laid down the principle that no citizen can be imprisoned unless his guilt has been proved in an open

court. To arrest a man only on the basis of suspicion and to throw him into a prison without proper court proceedings and without providing him a reasonable opportunity to produce his defence is not permissible in Islam.

5. **The Right to Protest Against Tyranny:**
Amongst the rights that Islam has conferred on human beings is the right to protest against government's tyranny. Referring to it the Qura'n says: "God does not love evil talk in public unless it is by someone who has been injured thereby."
In Islam, as has been argued earlier, all power and authority belongs to God, and with man there is only delegated power which becomes a trust; everyone who becomes a recipient or a donee of such a power has to stand in awful reverence before his people towards whom and for whose sake he will be called upon to use these powers. This was acknowledged by Hazrat Abu Bakr who said in his very first address: "Cooperate with me when I am right but correct me when I commit error; obey me so long as I follow the commandments of Allah and His prophet; but turn away from me when I deviate."

6. **Freedom of Expression:** Islam gives the right of freedom of thought and expression to all citizens of the Islamic state on the condition that it should be used for the propagation of virtue and truth and not for spreading evil and wickedness. The Islamic concept of freedom of expression is much superior to the concept prevalent in the West. Under no circumstances would Islam allow evil and wickedness to be propagated. It also does not give anybody the right to use abusive or offensive language in the name of criticism. It was the practice of the Muslims to enquire from the Holy Prophet whether on a certain matter a divine injunction had been revealed to him. If he said that he had received no divine injunction, the Muslims freely expressed their opinion on the matter.

7. **Freedom of Association:** Islam has also given people the right to freedom of association and formation of parties or organizations. This right is also subject to certain general rules.

8. **Freedom of Conscience and Conviction:** Islam has laid down the injunction:

   There should be no coercion in the matter of faith.

   On the contrary totalitarian societies totally deprive the individuals of their freedom. Indeed this undue exaltation of the state authority curiously enough postulates a sort of servitude, of salvishness on the part of man. At one time by slavery was meant total control of man over man - now that type of slavery has been legally abolished but in its place totalitarian societies impose a similar sort of control over individuals.

9. **Protection of Religious Sentiments:** Along with the freedom of conviction and freedom of conscience Islam has given the right to the individual that his religious sentiments will be given due respect and nothing will be said or done which may encroach upon his right.

10. **Protection from Arbitary Imprisonment:** Islam also recognizes the right of the individual that he will not be arrested or imprisoned for the offences of others. The Holy Qura'n has laid down this principle clearly: *No bearer of burdens shall be made to bear the burden of another.*

11. **The Right to Basic Necessities of Life:** Islam has recognized the right of the needy people that help and assistance will be provided to them: *And in their wealth there is acknowledged right for the needy and the destitute.*

12. **Equality Before Law:** Islam gives its citizens the right to absolute and complete equality in the eyes of the law.

13. **Rulers Not Above the Law:** A woman belonging to a high and noble family was arrested in connection with theft. The case was brought to the Prophet, and it was recommended that she might be spared the punishment for theft. The Prophet replied, "The nations that lived before you were destroyed by God because they punished the common-man for their offen ces and let their dignitaries go unpunished for their crimes; I swear by Him Who holds my life in His hand that even if Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad, had committed this crime, I would have amputated her hand."

14. **The Right to Participate in Affairs of the State:**
And their business is (conducted) through consultation among themselves (42:38)
The Shura or the legislative assembly has no other meaning except that: The executive head of the government and the members of the assembly should be elected by free and independent choice of the people.

Lastly, it is to be made clear that Islam tries to achieve the above-mentioned human rights and many others not only by providing certain legal safeguards but mainly by inviting mankind to transcend the lower level of animal life to be able to go beyond the mere ties fostered by the kinship of blood, racial superiority, linguistic arrogance, and economic privileges. It invites mankind to move on to a plane of existence where, by reason of his inner excellence, man can realize the ideal of the Brotherhood of man.